

Some Freaks I Have Known— What the Public Does Not Know About These Human Monsters

BY TODY HAMILTON

light, 1907, by R. F. Hamilton.)
man's reputation as a showman
it wholly on freaks and strange
as. His circus fame was not
he became associated with
made the most honest of busi-
out of the circus, that had been
fraud. With him circuses went
groceries and fake freaks. In
tern circuses everything must be
I personally have known but
ends. Joyce Heath, the alleged
nurse of Washington, was one.
mermaid was another. The
was exhibited in a small glass
Barnum's museum at the cor-
Ann street and Broadway. I
it very well. It was com-
the body of a fish and the
dried head of a monkey, the
being been shaved off. Some-
was the head of a human in-



The Circus Clown.

bore no resemblance to the
of mermaids printed in the
books. It was an insignificant
did no particular harm.
bump was not nearly so small
men known to have existed
m, but he was Barnumized so
the public thought him the
man that ever lived. There
some attempts at deception,
making giants taller by build-
ing a few inches inside of their
feet, they don't look serious. How-
ever, you don't think three or four
inches in his boots, rig him
frock coat and high "plug,"
any tall man will look a foot
man he is. It is one of those
optical illusions.

Circassian Girl Frauds.
called "Circassian girls" were
nounced frauds. They never
a genuine Circassian woman
hair worn by these exhibits.
Bowers museum days al-
girl who would consent to
hair cut and would bathe her
every day could be a "Cir-
cassian." The beer made her locks
to seem an Indian. We were
by a pretty young girl who wore
the "moss-haired girl." She
all over Europe without being
although the "moss" wig
undred after every performance.
shows were the tattooed people,
order to travel with them she
to become a freak. In theat-
ence she "created the part."
men, years ago quite com-
shows, were all frauds. The
117" was merely a light-
egro idiot from somewhere
New Jersey, where he now
believe, after having traveled
the world as a freak. He
a section which has pro-
albinos—the real albinos,
eyes. There is a species of
about all living abnormali-
tain people seem to be really
by horrors of any kind,
bird is charmed by a snake.

One Peculiar Case.
A peculiar case in which a
young girl became enamored
by a man in our "freak" de-
partment. This man was known as
the Chinese dwarf. He was
a creature whose legs were
and bent under him. The
thing he wore concealed his
deformity and gave him the
of a dwarf 3½ feet high;
of him was visible to show
ugliest human being that
first in Madison Square Gar-
attendees noted her stand-
long time, apparently en-
is unable to tear herself
oblivious to everything but
er. The next day she came
there she remained until
ing of the performance in

the arena closed that department of the
exhibition. This continued every day,
twice a day, until she attracted so
much attention that she was forbidden
to enter the place. Then she waited
outside and waylaid the "freak" in the
street. The last I heard of the affair
before starting out on the road, she
had left her family for this monstrosi-
ty.

She was but a conspicuous instance
of many similar cases in which appar-
ently cultured women have become
fascinated with human monstrosities.

though that is the only case I know
of in which the results were so shock-
ing and disastrous. This curious sym-
pathy is not confined to the softer sex,
for the negro known as the "Gyasti-
cutus," whose face was rather pretty,
but whose body was that of a lower
animal, had a similar fascination for
some men.

Circus Freaks Intelligent.
It may seem an odious comparison to
make, but it is a fact that in point of
intelligence, general information and
mental endowment the circus "freaks,"
as a class, are superior to those who
crowd about them in curiosity and pity.
And there is a touch of irony, as well
as humor, in the additional fact that
the professional freak regards the
passing crowd from his elevated plat-
form with something like the same
curiosity, not wholly unminged with con-
tempt. The remarks, sotto voce, ex-
changed on this platform sometimes
would be highly edifying, even if not
always complimentary, were they under-
stood by the swarm below.

In all of my experience in this con-
nection I have known few cases where-
in the "freaks" on exhibition were
below the average intelligence. The
midgits, Lucie Zarate and "Great
Peter the Small," possessed a very
low order of intelligence and no edu-
cation. The giants, on the other hand,
Chang, the Chinese eight-footer;
Colonel Goshen, Captain Bates and
George Auger, were all of a higher or-
der of intellect, were fairly well edu-
cated, and very interesting conversa-
tionalists. Having traveled widely,
they possessed stores of information
such as even well educated people who
remain in their narrow environment
never acquire.

As a rule, it may be said that gian-

tessees are neither so intelligent nor so
well informed. Ella Ewing, the tallest
woman of whom there is any record,
was just a plain Missouri country girl,
who "had to be shown." She was ex-
ceedingly modest and retiring and re-
fused to leave her own country, though
tempted by the show with the offer of
\$1000 a week. Her small education
had been in a country school, which
she was compelled to quit early be-
cause of her increasing size.

Perhaps no two children were ever
born with more natural intelligence



than the "Orissa Twins," Radica and
Dadica. They were bonded together by
a seemingly indissoluble bond at the
breast bone—though, when one sick-
ened unto death in Paris, a celebrated
French surgeon succeeded in separating
the living from the dead. They were
the brightest children I ever saw, and
absorbed information as a sponge takes
up water. At 12 years they could speak
three languages fluently; and they were
lovely and charming to look upon.

Dog-Faced Man.
The dog-faced man, "Jo-Jo," is per-
haps the most extraordinary freak of
nature ever exhibited. He is a Russian
of superior intelligence. While his head
and face, with the thick growth of long
silky hair, most nearly suggests a Skye
terrier, his brain is above the normal.
He has been exhibited in every civilized
country, and he is one of those broad-
minded men who unflinchingly profit by
what they see and hear. He under-
stands and writes Russian, German,
French and English. I have often con-
versed with him on various topics and
invariably become so much interested
in what he said that I forgot for the
moment that I could merely see his
twinkling eyes through the hair that
made the rest of his face invisible.

The man born without arms and the
man born without legs most fully illus-
trate nature's law of compensation.
The present Charles Frupp is certainly
an armless wonder, not only in doing
practically everything with his toes
that ordinary folk can do with their
hands, but in his degree of intelligence
and mental equipment. He is the val-
uable foil for another equally remark-
able freak, the legless man, Eli Bo-
wen. They are always placed together
on the platform and are boon compan-
ions. Both are serious married men
and the fathers of interesting families.
Bowen himself is an acrobat, climbing
and leaping with his hands and arms,
which are developed like another man's
legs.

About the Bearded Woman.
The "bearded lady," Annie Jones, is
a woman of culture and refinement.
Bearded women are not uncommon in
the show business. They have been on

public exhibition for the last fifty
years. This particular one is really a
modest and charming lady, with all that
little and can play on various instru-
ments of music. She is ready and in-
telligent in conversation, and has been
married twice.

The "elastic skin" man, James
Morris, is a barber by trade, and a
good one. He now has a shop in New
York, and on the road runs the bar-
ber's tent, handling the razor and
shears to the satisfaction of the em-
ployees of the show between perform-
ances.

"Billy Wells," the hard-headed man
who permits a man with a sledgeham-
mer to break blocks of granite on his
head, has an entirely normal brain
under an abnormally thick skull. He
often took tickets in front of the main
tent, and it is presumed that he would
not be trusted in such a responsible
post were he not thoroughly equipped
mentally for such a trying job.

The double-bodied Hindu, "Laloo,"
was a very intelligent freak. I have
often heard him disputing with his
personal manager. His only failing
was prodigality. He would spend
money lavishly, and would buy every-
thing he might fancy, which called
for frequent protests from his man-
ager. He was well read on ordinary
subjects, spoke four languages and al-
ways went well dressed. Away from
the platform of "freaks" he gave the
impression of a foreign gentleman in
comfortable circumstances. His ab-
normality, the lower half of a second
body protruding from below his breast-
bone, was carefully concealed by his
clothing.

The Skeleton Dude.

J. W. Coffey, familiarly known as
the "Skeleton Dude," had all the in-
tellectual gifts common to the average
man. Herman, the marvelous expansion-
ist, who could break chains by lung
power was educated in Germany, and
had as much good sense as any of the
Kaiser's middle-class subjects. He de-
lighted in practical jokes. Sometimes



the boys took him to a clothing store,
and in the selection of a vest he would
complain to the proprietor that the
buttons were never sewed on properly.
Of course the proprietor would solemnly
guarantee these particular buttons.
Then Herman would breathe, and the
buttons would fly all over the place,
to the astonishment and chagrin of
the shopkeeper.

"Beautiful Marie," the fat girl;
Harry Clarke, "the human pin-
cushion," and Rob Roy, a true pink-
eyed albino, with the faculty of dis-
joining his limbs at will, were all of

average intelligence. What they lack-
ed in early education they made up in
general information picked up in their
wide travels, showing good and whole-
some powers of observation.

If one had any doubts about the
mental equipment of "freaks," each
doubt would be solved by reading the
accounts published in the London papers
of the sensational "revolt of the
freaks," in which their speeches and
quips were printed in full. The re-
porters who attended that "indigna-
tion meeting" confessed themselves as-
tounded. Even the midgits—and I
mean the small people, not thirty inches
high—took a hand.

Midgits Were Accomplished.

The Haworth troupe of five midgits,
by the way, were highly accomplished
musicians, vocalists and linguists, and
they gave a bright and sparkling par-
lor entertainment equal to anything of
the kind ever offered by larger actors.
Tom Thumb and Minnie Warren were
of the same intellectual character. Both
were perfectly normal human beings ex-
cept in the matter of size.

The purely intellectual "freaks"—
so called from some extraordinary men-
tal superiority—have been numerous.
Some have been on public exhibition and
others have not. In the show they

are exhibited on the same platform with
the physical freaks. Of these, perhaps
none has been more remarkable than
little Gracie Cochran, a girl of 7 years.
Her memory was something almost su-
pernatural. She could answer any ques-
tion on a great variety of subjects pro-
pounded by any person or persons in a
crowd. You might name any country,
obscure island, town or village in the
world and she could tell you where it
was; the number of its inhabitants, etc.,
and this instantly—almost before the
last word left the questioner's lips.
Frequently a lot of smart college stu-
dents would band together in the crowd
and by preconcerted arrangement fire
questions at the child with the idea of
confusing her with names and dates,
etc. But she invariably came out vic-
torious.

We afterward had a boy with us
abroad who was phenomenally gifted in
the same way. His parents, living in
Wisconsin, were in no way remarkable.
In the course of the lad's public career
he answered probably 25,000 separate
questions in this off-hand style.

The "manufactured freak" embraces
such as the tattooed man, the tattooed
woman, the moss-haired girl, some al-
leged "albinos," etc. They are ordinary
people with no distinguishing mental
characteristics.

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